ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

In the Matter of the Mortgage Banker License of:

No. 06F-BD024-BNK

AMERICAN MORTGAGE SPECIALISTS, INC. AND ERIC L. WEIGHT, PRESIDENT

1255 W. Baseline Road, Suite 288 Mesa, AZ 85202

CONSENT ORDER

Respondents.

On January 18, 2006, the Arizona Department of Financial Institutions ("Department") issued a Notice of Hearing alleging that Respondents had violated Arizona law. Wishing to resolve this matter in lieu of an administrative hearing, and without admitting or denying liability Respondents do not contest the following Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, and consent to the entry of the following Order.

FINDINGS OF FACT

- Respondent American Mortgage Specialists, Inc. ("AMS") is an Arizona corporation 1. authorized to transact business in Arizona as a mortgage banker, license number BK 0905487, within the meaning of A.R.S. §§ 6-941, et seq. The nature of AMS' business is that of making, negotiating, or offering to make or negotiate a mortgage banking loan or a mortgage loan secured by Arizona real property, within the meaning of A.R.S. § 6-941(5).
- 2. Respondent Eric L. Weight ("Mr. Weight") is President of AMS. Mr. Weight is authorized to transact business in Arizona as a mortgage banker within the meaning of A.R.S. § 6-941(5), as outlined within A.R.S. § 6-943(F).
- 3. AMS and Mr. Weight are not exempt from licensure as a mortgage banker within the meaning of A.R.S. §§ 6-942 and 6-941(5).
- AMS' prior examination on July 22, 2004 resulted in an Order to Cease and Desist; Notice of Opportunity for Hearing; Consent to Entry of Order No. 05F-BD035-SBD. AMS agreed to correct all of the violations set forth in the Findings of Facts and in the Report of Examination by signing and agreeing to a Consent Order No. 05F-BD035-SBD on or around October 18, 2004.

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- 5. Beginning on July 11, 2005 through September 27, 2005, the Department conducted an examination of the mortgage banker business of AMS and Mr. Weight, and found that the Respondents have:
 - a. Failed to prominently display Respondents' mortgage banker license at a minimum of nine (9) branch offices;
 - b. Failed to notify the Superintendent of at least eight (8) branch office address changes and/or branch office closures before the changes occurred: (1) Santos Branch, BK BR 0106377; (2) Tulli Branch, BK BR 0106623; (3) Conklin Branch, BK BR 0108245; (4) Moreno Branch, BK BR 0108431; (5) Baugus Branch, BK BR 0108674; (6) Castle Branch, BK BR 0108022; (7) Christian Branch, BK BR 0108029; and (8) Armendariz Branch, BK BR 0108243;
 - Engaged in unlicensed activity by making, negotiating, or offering to make or negotiate mortgage loans at branch offices before first obtaining a branch office license from the Superintendent;
 - d. Failed to obtain at least nine (9) branch office licenses from the Superintendent before making, negotiating, or offering to make or negotiate mortgage loans at branch offices that are currently operating without a branch office license;
 - e. Transferred or assigned its mortgage banker branch office licenses to at least one hundred and five (105) branch managers, specifically:
 - Required branch managers to pay for all branch start up costs, including, but not limited to, the cost of branch office licenses, bank account deposits, background checks, accounting fees, HUD license fees, security deposits to the Respondents, training, payroll fees, and loan software fees;
 - ii. Required branch managers to sign agreements to pay monthly fees for the use of its license;
 - iii. Failed to assume responsibility and liability for branch office leases that are

- rightfully the responsibility and liability of Respondents;
- iv. Failed to assume the responsibility and liability for branch office equipment leases that are rightfully the responsibility and liability of Respondents;
- v. Failed to assume the responsibility and liability for utilities, office supplies and equipment, appraisals, alarm equipment, and any other bills incurred by its branches that are rightfully the responsibility and liability of Respondents;
- vi. Has stated to the Better Business Bureau that all of its branches are independent of the corporate parent;
- vii. Failed to maintain physical access to its branches at all times;
- viii. Failed to maintain control over the payment of branch expenses, resulting in late payments to vendors, specifically: late payments to appraisers and utility companies;
- ix. Failed to maintain a uniform settlement service fee structure among all of its branch offices;
- x. Failed to employ practices and procedures consistent with all HUD guidelines; and
- xi. Failed to maintain control over branch bank accounts, allowing branch managers to write payroll checks to themselves, and reimburse themselves for questionable expenses;
- f. Solicited and transacted business using an unlicensed name, specifically: the

 Respondents approved the use of a website (www.nocostaz.com) and mailings for

 one of the branch managers wherein an unlicensed entity (No Cost Mortgage, Inc.)

 solicits Arizona borrowers;
- g. Failed to include the required disclosures within regulated advertising, specifically:
 - i. Failed to disclose the annual percentage rate (APR) as prominent as the interest rate in one (1) solicitation letter;

- ii. Failed to include all required disclosures when trigger terms were used in six (6) advertisements; and
- iii. Failed to include the principal place of business license number in five (5) advertisements/solicitations;
- h. Failed to conduct the minimum elements of reasonable employee investigations before hiring employees, specifically:
 - i. Failed to collect and review all of the documents authorized by the Immigration and Control Act of 1986 for one (1) employees;
 - ii. Failed to obtain a completed "19" (Employment Eligibility Verification Form) for one (1) employees;
 - iii. Failed to consult with the applicant's most recent or next most recent employer for sixty (60) employees;
 - iv. Failed to inquire regarding an applicant's qualifications and competence for the position for thirty-seven (37) employees, many of whom were hired prior to the 2004 examination;
 - v. Failed to obtain a credit report for six (6) employees for whom credit reports are required;
 - vi. Failed to obtain a credit report before hiring three (3) employees; and
 - vii. Failed to conduct further investigation of nine (9) employees with derogatory credit reports;
- i. Contracted with or paid compensation to unlicensed, independent contractors, specifically:
 - i. Paid \$116,900.80 to two (2) employees on a "1099" basis rather than a "W-2" basis in 2004;
 - ii. Purchased leads from at least one (1) unlicensed lead provider in 2005;
 - 1. May 4, 2005—Red Hot Funding: \$28.95;

- iii. Paid at least one (1) California mortgage broker a co-broker fee in 2005;
 - 1. May 3, 2005—Loans Bancorp: \$4,777.50;
- iv. Paid at least one (1) unlicensed loan processor in 2005;
 - March 3, 2005 and March 15, 2005—American Financial Group:
 \$3,475.00;
- v. Paid at least one (1) unlicensed entity a co-broker fee in 2004;
 - 1. August 30, 2004—A.E. Couszins Investments, L.L.C.: \$691.20;
- vi. Paid monies to five (5) persons in 2005 for what appear to be referrals;
- vii. Paid at least sixteen (16) employee-owned companies loan origination income and expense reimbursement monies in 2004 and 2005, specifically: (1) KOG Enterprises, Inc.—\$17,290.00; (2) Samor Partners, Inc.—\$27,000.00; (3) JRB Financial, L.L.C.—\$15,595.00; (4) Bell & Associates, Inc.—\$81,885.00; (5) Leo National, Inc.—\$113,910.85; (6) Homeland Financial USA, L.L.C.—\$11,050.00; (7) Go Marketing, Inc.—\$45,857.00; (8) Shannon 2000, Inc.—\$51,720.00; (9) Loan SolutionsOnline.com—\$2,525.27; (10) Smart Loan Shopper.com—\$526.47; (11) Slaysman, McHenry & Associates, L.L.C.—\$8,115.00; (12) Value Loan Concepts, L.L.C.—\$5,340.91; (13) Coel-Management, Inc.—\$47,770.67; (14) Coel's-Equipment—\$45,482.51; (15) Coel-Marketing—\$822.22; and (16) Azsota, Inc.—\$2,700.00;
- j. Failed to update and reconcile records in an accurate and timely manner as evidenced by thirty (30) overdrafts on various accounts, and as evidenced by one (1) "Non Sufficient Funds" (NSF) check written to the Department in the amount of \$250.00;
- k. Failed to maintain correct and complete records, specifically:
 - i. Failed to separate and maintain Arizona financial information from that of other states;
 - ii. Failed to maintain receipts for all company credit card charge accounts; and

- iii. Failed to maintain samples of every piece of advertising for its branches;
- Failed to maintain an accurate listing of all executed loan applications for several branches, specifically:
 - i. The amount of the initial loan request was missing;
 - ii. The final disposition dates were missing;
 - iii. The final dispositions were missing; and
 - iv. The loan officers' names were missing;
- m. Failed to maintain originals or copies of loan transactions, specifically: four (4) documents of final disposition (DFD) were missing from the loan files and two (2) initial loan applications were not dated;
- n. Allowed borrowers to sign regulated documents containing blank spaces, specifically:
 - i. Thirteen (13) preliminary truth in lending (TIL) disclosures were signed with the middle section blank;
 - ii. Twelve (12) affiliated business disclosures were signed in blank even though such disclosures were not required;
 - iii. One (1) good faith estimate (GFE), one (1) flood hazard notice, one (1) Patriot

 Act disclosure, one (1) written fee agreement, and six (6) homeowner's insurance

 disclosures were signed in blank;
 - iv. The authorization to complete blank spaces disclosure did not specifically identify the blank spaces to be completed;
 - v. The consent to complete documents disclosure was missing the required notice conspicuously printed on its face; and
 - vi. The consent to complete blank spaces disclosure did not identify the document and blank spaces to be completed;
- o. Failed to comply with the disclosure requirements of Title I of the Consumer Credit Protection Act (15 U.S.C. §§ 1601 through 1666j), the Real Estate Settlement

Procedures Act (12 U.S.C. §§ 2601 through 2617), and the regulations promulgated under these acts, specifically:

- i. yield spread premiums were not disclosed within good faith estimates to twentyfour (24) borrowers; a preliminary good faith estimate was not issued to one (1)
 borrower; servicing transfer disclosures were not issued to two (2) borrowers; a
 good faith estimate and truth in lending disclosure was not issued to one (1)
 borrower; timely servicing transfer disclosures, good faith estimates and
 preliminary truth in lending disclosures were not issued to five (5) borrowers and
 origination fees, discount fees, underwriting fees, doc prep fees, and application
 fees were incorrectly disclosed on eight (8) borrowers' good faith estimates;
- p. Failed to completely disclose material facts in the course of the mortgage banker business, specifically:
 - i. Paid co-broker fees to an employee's spouse's company without disclosing the fees on the final settlement statement;
 - ii. Charged borrowers administration fees without fully disclosing what services are provided to warrant said fees; and
 - iii. Failed to re-disclose annual percentage rates (APRs) to seven (7) borrowers when the final APRs exceeded the initial APRs by more than the one quarter of one percent tolerance level;
- q. Failed to include the purpose of payments made in the listing of checks written;
- Failed to maintain a trust subsidiary ledger containing all of the required fields,
 specifically, the trust subsidiary ledger was missing:
 - i. The loan number;
 - ii. Purpose for the amount received;
 - iii. The date that monies were deposited into the trust account;
 - iv. The amount disbursed;

- v. The date disbursed; and
- vi. The balance;

In addition, each trust balance had not been reconciled to each trust subsidiary ledger at each reconciliation;

- s. Failed to use a correct written fee agreement when accepting advance fees from borrowers, specifically:
 - One Agreement to Terms is missing a signature and date line for the company's representative and contains incorrect verbiage relating to the refundability of fees; and
 - ii. A Notice of Obligation to Pay Appraisal Fees incorrectly states that the advance fee is not refundable for any reason when the fee would be refundable if the service had not yet been performed;
- t. Required persons seeking mortgage loans in amounts of two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000.00) or less to enter into agreements that were ambiguous and therefore appeared to discourage the persons from seeking a loan from another source;
- Failed to observe generally accepted accounting principles and practices, specifically,
 incorrectly categorized and reported payroll and business expenses;
- v. Failed to ensure that the Responsible Individual maintained a position of active management and failed to ensure that the Responsible Individual was knowledgeable about Arizona activities, specifically:
 - i. Unlicensed branches were maintained;
 - ii. Branch address changes and branch status changes were not reported timely;
 - iii. Complaint responses were untimely;
 - iv. A previous consent order was not adhered to;
 - v. Five complaints have been received from unpaid appraisers;

- vi. Control over branch fee uniformity has not been maintained;
- vii. Control over branch advertising has not been maintained; and
- viii. Employee owned companies have been reimbursed for expenses that rightfully were expenses of the Respondents;
- w. Failed to furnish information to the Department within a reasonable time, specifically, twenty-three (23) responses to consumer complaints were late; complaints are still open and unresolved;
- x. Failed to use proper appraisal disclosures, specifically, used unlawful appraisal disclosures that limit a borrower to 90 days in which the borrower may request a copy of an appraisal for which the borrower has paid;
- y. Failed to comply with the terms of Consent Order 05F-BD035-SBD, which is grounds for license denial, suspension, or revocation, specifically:
 - i. Failed to obtain the statutory branch office licenses for each branch location before operating said branch offices;
 - ii. Failed to discontinue the transfer or assignment of its mortgage banker license;
 - iii. Failed to include the principal place of business license number, as issued on the principal place of business license, within all advertising, solicitations, and websites;
 - iv. Failed to conduct the minimum elements of reasonable employee investigations before hiring employees;
 - v. Continued to pay compensation to, contract with, or employ as an independent contractor, persons who were acting as a mortgage broker or mortgage banker but who were not licensed in Arizona as such;
 - vi. Failed to adequately reconcile and monitor bank accounts to ensure that bank accounts would not be overdrawn;
 - vii. Failed to maintain either originals or clearly legible copies of all mortgage loan

- transactions for the appropriate period of time;
- viii. Failed to first obtain proper written authorization to fill in blank spaces in certain documents before permitting applicants to sign regulated loan documents containing blank spaces;
 - ix. Failed to comply with the disclosure requirements of Title I of the Consumer Credit Protection Act (15 U.S.C. §§ 1601 through 1666j), the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act (12 U.S.C. §§ 2601 through 2617), and the regulations promulgated under these acts;
 - x. Failed to remove the unlawful 90-day limiting provisions from appraisal disclosure forms; and
 - xi. Failed to ensure that the Responsible Individual maintained a position of active management at all times.
- 6. The Department has found no evidence that Respondents' violations were willful or intentional.
- 7. Respondents have voluntarily agreed to take corrective action and have attempted to comply with the Department's requests. However, such finding does not waive any provisions of this Consent Order

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

- 1. Pursuant to A.R.S. § 6-941, et seq., the Superintendent of Financial Institutions ("Superintendent") has the authority and duty to regulate all persons engaged in the mortgage banker business and with the enforcement of statutes, rules, and regulations relating to mortgage bankers.
- 2. By the conduct set forth in the Findings of Fact, AMS and Mr. Weight have violated the mortgage banker statutes and rules as follows:
 - a. A.R.S. § 6-944(C) and A.A.C. R20-4-1805 by failing to prominently display the mortgage banker license in all offices where business is conducted;
 - b. A.R.S. § 6-944(D) by failing to properly notify the superintendent before closures of

- branches and address changes occurred at a minimum of eight (8) branch offices;
- c. A.R.S. § 6-943(A) by engaging in unlicensed mortgage loan activity at branch offices before said branch offices were licensed;
- d. A.R.S. § 6-944(D) by currently engaging in mortgage loan activity at a minimum of nine (9) unlicensed branch offices;
- e. A.R.S. § 6-944(A) by transferring or assigning its mortgage banker license to at least one hundred and five (105) branch managers;
- f. A.R.S. § 6-943(N) by using an unlicensed name in transacting or soliciting business;
- g. A.R.S § 6-943(N) and A.R.S. § 6-946(E) by failing to use its principal place of business license number within all regulated advertising, using trigger terms in advertising without all required disclosures and by displaying an annual percentage rate less prominent than the interest rate quoted;
- h. A.R.S. § 6-943(O) and A.A.C. R20-4-102 by failing to conduct reasonable investigations before hiring employees;
- i. A.R.S. § 6-947(B) and A.A.C. R20-4-102 by paying compensation to unlicensed, independent contractors;
- j. A.A.C. R20-4-1806(C) by failing to adequately update and reconcile its bank accounts;
- k. A.R.S. § 6-946(A) and A.A.C. R20-4-1806(B) by failing to maintain correct and complete records of the mortgage banking business;
- 1. A.A.C. R20-4-1806(B)(1) by failing to maintain a proper loan application listing;
- m. A.R.S. § 6-946(A) and A.A.C. R20-4-1806(B)(6) by failing to maintain properly completed copies of mortgage loan transactions;
- n. A.R.S. § 6-947(A) and A.A.C. R20-4-1808 by allowing borrowers to sign regulated documents containing blank spaces without obtaining the proper authorization from the borrowers to complete the blank spaces;

- o. A.R.S. § 6-946(E) and A.A.C. R20-4-1806(B)(6)(e) by failing to issue proper federal disclosures;
- p. A.R.S. § 6-947(L) by misrepresenting co-broker fees, administration fees and annual percentage rates to borrowers;
- q. A.A.C. R20-4-1806(B)(3) by failing to maintain a proper listing of checks written;
- r. A.A.C. R20-4-1806(B)(5) and A.A.C. R20-4-1806(C) by failing to maintain a correct trust subsidiary ledger and by failing to verify each trust balance to each trust subsidiary ledger at each reconciliation;
- s. A.R.S. § 6-946(C) by failing to use proper written fee agreements;
- t. A.R.S. § 6-947(E) by using unlawful exclusive agency agreements;
- u. A.R.S. § 6-946(B) and A.A.C. R20-4-102 by failing to observe generally accepted accounting principles and practices, specifically, incorrectly categorized and reported payroll and business expenses;
- v. A.R.S. § 6-943(F) and A.A.C. R20-4-102 by failing to ensure that the Responsible Individual maintained a position of active management; and
- w. A.R.S. § 6-946(C) by using unlawful appraisal disclosures that limit a borrower to 90 days in which the borrower may request a copy of an appraisal for which the borrower has paid.
- 3. The violations of applicable laws, set forth above, constitute grounds to deny, suspend, or revoke AMS' and Mr. Weight's mortgage banker license, number BK 0905487, pursuant to A.R.S. § 6-945(A).
- 4. Respondents failure to comply with Consent Order 05F-BD035-SBD is grounds for license denial, suspension, or revocation pursuant to A.R.S. § 6-945(A)(7).
- 5. Respondents failure to furnish information to the Department within a reasonable time is grounds for license denial, suspension, or revocation pursuant to A.R.S. § 6-945(A)(3).
 - 6. The violations, set forth above, constitute grounds for the pursuit of any other remedy

necessary or proper for the enforcement of statutes and rules regulating mortgage bankers in Arizona pursuant to A.R.S. §§ 6-123 and 6-131.

7. Pursuant to § 6-132, Respondents' violations of the aforementioned statutes are grounds for a civil penalty of not more than five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00) for each violation for each day.

ORDER

- 1. AMS and Mr. Weight shall immediately correct all violations set forth in the Findings of Fact and in the Report of Examination. AMS and Mr. Weight:
 - a. shall prominently display the mortgage banker license in all offices where business is conducted;
 - b. shall properly notify the Superintendent before closures of branches and address changes at branch offices;
 - c. shall not engage in unlicensed mortgage loan activity at branch offices before said branch offices are licensed;
 - d. shall not engage mortgage loan activity at unlicensed branch offices;
 - e. shall not transfer or assign licensee's mortgage banker license to branch managers;
 - f. shall not use an unlicensed name in transacting or soliciting business;
 - g. shall use its principal place of business license number within all regulated advertising; shall not use trigger terms in advertising without all required disclosures; and shall not displaying an annual percentage rate less prominently than the interest rate quoted;
 - h. shall conduct reasonable investigations before hiring employees;
 - i. shall not pay compensation to unlicensed, independent contractors;
 - j. shall adequately update and reconcile licensee's bank accounts;
 - k. shall maintain correct and complete records of the mortgage banking business;
 - l. shall maintain a proper loan application listing;

- m. shall maintain properly completed copies of mortgage loan transactions;
- n. shall not allow borrowers to sign regulated documents containing blank spaces without obtaining the proper authorization from the borrowers to complete the blank spaces;
- o. shall issue proper federal disclosures;
- shall not misrepresent co-broker fees, administration fees and annual percentage rates to borrowers;
- q. shall maintain a proper listing of checks written;
- r. shall maintain a correct trust subsidiary ledger and by failing to verify each trust balance to each trust subsidiary ledger at each reconciliation;
- s. shall use proper written fee agreements;
- t. shall not use unlawful exclusive agency agreements;
- u. shall observe generally accepted accounting principles and practices;
- v. shall ensure that the Responsible Individual maintains a position of active management; and
- w. shall not use unlawful appraisal disclosures that limit a borrower to 90 days in which the borrower may request a copy of an appraisal for which the borrower has paid.
- 2. AMS and Mr. Weight will be examined within one (1) year of execution of this Consent Order. The future Examination will be used to determine if AMS and Mr. Weight have complied with this Consent Order and whether any new or additional violations have occurred since the date this Consent Order is entered.
- 3. AMS and Mr. Weight shall immediately pay to the Department a civil money penalty in the amount of two hundred twenty-five thousand dollars (\$225,000.00). AMS and Mr. Weight are jointly and severally liable for payment of the civil money penalty. The Respondents shall pay the civil money penalty to the Department according to the following schedule:
 - a. Sixty thousand dollars (\$60,000) due on March 15, 2006;

himself, represents that he is the president and as such, has been authorized by American Mortgage

Specialists, Inc. to consent to the entry of this Order on its behalf. 1 Respondents waive all rights to seek judicial review or otherwise to challenge or 2 6. 3 contest the validity of the Notice of Hearing. DATED this (3 day of 4 5 6 Epic L. Weight, President American Mortgage Specialists, Inc. 7 8 9 ORIGINAL of the foregoing filed this All day of Much, 2006, in the office of: 10 11 Felecia A. Rotellini 12 Superintendent of Financial Institutions Arizona Department of Financial Institutions 13 ATTN: June Beckwith 14 2910 N. 44th Street, Suite 310 Phoenix, AZ 85018 15 COPY mailed same date to: 16 Lewis D. Kowal 17 Administrative Law Judge Office of the Administrative Hearings 18 1400 West Washington, Suite 101 Phoenix, AZ 85007 19. 20 Craig A. Raby Assistant Attorney General 21 Office of the Attorney General 1275 West Washington 22 Phoenix, AZ 85007 23 Robert D. Charlton, Assistant Superintendent

Joan Doran, Senior Examiner

2910 N. 44th Street, Suite 310

Phoenix, AZ 85018

Arizona Department of Financial Institutions

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1	AND COPY MAILED SAME DATE by Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested, to
2	
3	Eric L. Weight, President American Mortgage Specialists, Inc. 1255 W. Baseline Road, Suite 288
4	Mesa, AZ 85202
5	Respondents
6	Sondra Bialkowski Vice President, Branch Operations American Mortgage Specialists, Inc.
7	1255 W. Baseline Road, Suite 288 Mesa, AZ 85202
8	Mark S. Sifferman, Esq.
9	Norling Kolsrud Sifferman & Davis, PC 16427 N. Scottsdale Road, #210
10	Scottsdale, AZ 85254 Attorney for Respondents
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